towards a more holistic violence

Thoughts On PNW Anti-Fascism

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entire lives around their hate and the furtherance of it. Similarly, we must respond with a more holistic style of attack and defense, violence and social base moving that allows us to counter their events with more ease and resilience.

Clearly, the roots of the racist violence seen in the PNW over the last 25 years are endemic and structural, and as long as the State and capital still function, this issue of white supremacy and racist violence will be found. This is clear in all of the types of violence done against communities of color, whether it is done by open white supremacists or their more veiled but no less racist counter parts, the police. Hopefully, this line of thought into what we can call a generationally significant geneaology of racist organizing simply gives us better tools to fight back in the future. By removing some of the immediacy of the rhetoric, we are not attempting to minimize the current political climate or negate the experiences of those feeling the most forceful brunt of this violence. Instead we hope to foster a feeling of constant vigilance, of never backing down or letting up on the fight against fascism and racism. That if we position ourselves with the capacity to consistently counter the narrative being set forth by the racist right, esoteric left and unafffilaited racists in-between, maybe we can make the world safer for us and all of those who would like to live free of domination.

A common theme between anarchists in this country is the concept of the cycle; of crests and waves and upsurgencies and downswings. Attempts to completely debunk this theory would be foolish, instead the aim here is to question its usefulness in many scenarios. Recently, we as anarchists and anti-fascists have kicked up a gear in response to what can be percieved as a rise in white supremacist activity in the Pacific Northwest. As opposed to spending a significant amount of time determining whether that rise is "real" or imagined, we'd like to highlight the ways that social movements, including the white power organizations, never really go away, and that their legacies have staying power even if organizationally they do not. Our interest is to weave a loose thread through the last few decades of information that bring us to our current situation and to bring us closer to a world free of the racism and racist violence we've all come far too accustomed to.

It could be easy to compile a list of attacks, meetings and groups to try and prove that this upsurge is real and the moment to strike is now! While there are plenty of facts and figures thrown in this piece, we'd rather focus on that the time is always now and that the immediacy of our responses should be constant and not contingent on political climate or media attention.

There are communities and groups of people that have been feeling the brunt of these boneheads for years, without break. The level of violence done and threatened has been the reality for longer than any of us have been congnisant of it. And it is a failing, but a truth, of the contemporary anarchist movement that we are just responding now. This is not to say that the responses haven't been there. There has been incredible and solid antifa organizing throughout the region for as long as racists have organized themselves. People have risked life and safety to confront, harass and familiarize themselves with a violent and dedicated enemy. But by and large, we've failed in our ability to create consistent responses that do not treat every gathering called on stormfront or sighting at a bar as a moment of crisis.

Now, we feel, is a moment for those of us who don't live in traditionally targetted communities, or the parts of town where these fuckers live and gather, to see some of the broader picture. We are more able in this moment to speak from the center of ourselves as opposed to an abstract, because it's time to admit that we're all a little more scared; a little more wary of the white guy at the end of the bar with tattoos we don't totally understand, a little more apt to look in the rearview and make sure that truck with the confederate flag doesn't pull in behind us. It's this palpable fear that is a part of what makes this real. Others have been feeling it their entire lives, regardless of whether there are the facts and figures to back it up.

To write a comprehensive history of the ways white supremacists and fascists have organized themselves in the area over the last 20 to 25 years would be a monumental task. There is far too much, and the time into that research would be put to better use elsewhere. In this you're going to find some of the bigger points, the ones that spill past themselves and were either influenced by or influenced the white power and fascist movements on a national scale. In the most recent histories, we've tried to pull in info about the ways the Left has responded to or failed to respond to these threats. Sadly, these moments, the ones of attack and defense by anti-fascists are much less documented.

Much of what we see in the current white supremacist NW milieu can be traced back to the creation of The Order. Also known as the Brüder Schweigen (German for Brothers Keep Silent) or Silent Brotherhood, it was a white supremacist organization active in the United States between September 1983 and December 1984. Their activities ranged from bank robberies and burglaries to murder and assault.

The Order was founded by Robert Mathews in late September 1983 at Mathews' farm near Metaline, Washington. Brought into the Mormon Church as a teenager Matthews formed an anti-communist

meaningful way.

What we've seen in the PNW over the last year in terms of response to racist organzing has been incredible. The photos from Seattle of a 500+ person antifa march through the rain, and the multiple smaller but by far no less fierce demonstrations in Olympia leading up to that march are just some of the moments where a force was shown, where the black flags and baseball bats came out to prove that this does not begin or end with rhetoric. Often forgotten is equally dangerous public organizing and researching backing up these events, an invaluable element. But the question of the interim still stands always coming full-circle; as anarchists, anti-fascists and anti-racists, what should and can we be doing in these moments?

A show of force when they back us up against that wall is necessary. They are, in fact, not going to go away if we close our eyes or attempt to create "alternative spaces" to counter their events. This narrative of avoidance comes from well worn and paternalistic ideas of "safety," and are created more to decide who has agency to determine their own wants and abilities to engage in violence. A tactic of control rampant in most leftist white ally anti-racist organizing.

The left has been a part of creating the mess we are currently in, and the question still stands as to whether or not there is something that can be stolen from it in terms of movement building. Are there moments where our strategies could incorprate some of theirs without being tainted by the problematic tendencies we all know too well? There needs to be more structures for people to fit themselves into in these "down times," both formal and informal ways of organizing ourselves, so that disaffected young whites don't end up buying into hate filled rhetoric. Something besides the posturing and bravado of antifa and ARA perhaps? What about a re-incorporation of an anti-racist line into everything we do, in all of the facets of our lives? Being anti-racists needs to be a part of all of our generalized strategies and not something we do for a night or on the weekend. Nor can it be something we exchaust ourselves with in these moments of attack. The racists around us structure their

movement and those on the anti-racist left.

What we can see currently is the ways in which the structures set in place 25-30 years ago have direct and specific effect on the things we must destroy today. The Order and it's style of terror emboldened an entire generation of people into racist hate, and their thoughts on the the ideal homeland created the space for them to import more of their supporters to the area. Over the last few decades, the conversation about how to be and do white supremacy has centered around strategies of commonality. The Northwest Territorial Imperative has been realized to a degree and this place has become a bastian for racist ideology, to the point where the fringe racist elements of different music scenes (black metal, neo-folk, post-punk) have gained tremendous traction and feel confident to no longer hide themselves. Segments of the neo-pagan religous belief structures have uncoded their racists tenants and now wear them proudly, while a strange intertwining of the eco-movement and fascism has thrown many people's political heros and founders into deep question. Concurrently, there has been a rise of Volksfront style boot stomping being seen in urban centers, with a revival of the American Front and it's propensity for armed violence on the horizon.

In 2016 there is little left to be added to this topic. Even this piece is a regurgitation of past knowledge, just organized in a slightly different way. But, we all know that this is real, that the fear and violence and ways in which this is never going away are real. We know that the police, while not simply the same exact racists, are just another enemy to fight. We know that almost everything we do is going to be marginal and attacked in the media. We know that there isn't a revolution around the corner and that even when we beg for a force to form, most people stay home. We understand the nuanced nature of the kinds of white supremacy we see around us and entire non-profit sectors have been built around countering it on a certain systemic level. And we know that these forces of hate and racist violence aren't going anywhere, and that what resembles a left in this country is incapable and unwilling to confront it in a

militia group called the "Sons of Liberty". Fundamentally, The Order's goal was the overthrow of the US government and the establishment of a homeland (now the Northwest Territorial Imperative) from which Jews and non-whites would be barred. The original 9 members were a conglomeration of members of the Aryan Nation, National Alliance and unaffiliated racists.

As a group they raised money through robberies of businesses, banks and armored cars. Some of their attacks included the bombings of a theater and synagogue in the Portland area. The money raised in their largest heist was spread to like minded groups and individuals across the country, such as the National Alliance and the White Patriot Party. In their short lived criminal careers they managed to assault and murder multiple people. They created a "hit-list" and on June 18th, 1984 they murdered the number two name on that list, Alan Berg, a Jewish talk show host in Colorado.

This gained them the first large scale media attention outside of the PNW, as well as considerable attention from federal authorites. In all, over 75 people were indicted under RICO for being associated with The Order and its activities. They were partially identified by a cooperating defendant, Frazier Glenn Miller Jr, who testifed in order to recieve a reduced sentence in the RICO sweep. Miller is the founder and former leader of both the Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the White Patriot Party (which benefited monetarily from The Order's activities), both of which were operated as paramilitary organizations in the 1980s. He was present as a member the National Socialist Party of America during the Greensboro massacre on November 3, 1979 and after a lifetime of racist violence was given the death penalty for the murder of 3 people in the Overland Park Kansas Jewish Community Center shooting in 2014.

Another notable member of The Order is David Lane, a life-long white supremacist and former member of the John Birch Society, Colorado State Ku Klux Klan and in 1981 was the Colorado State Organizer of the Aryan Nations. Lane is the originator of the 14

words, a racist slogan that has been picked up by adherents across the country. A large part of white supremacist imagery, especially that worn by neo-nazis, kkk members and those belonging to the Aryan Brotherhood, includes the number 14 as a reference to Lane. He has remained a fixture in the anti-christian, pagan racist right since his incarceration and life sentence stemming from the murder of Alan Berg.

The Order founder Robert Matthews remained on the run after the indicments were handed down until December 1984, when state authorites tracked him to a house on Whidbey Island, WA. Refusing to surrender, Matthews and the FBI entered into a shootout where the house became engulfed by flames and he was killed. Due to his refusal to surrender and death at the hands of the state Matthews has become a martyr and hero in the eyes of many white nationalists. Since his death, there has been on and off yearly events on Whidbey Island commonly referred to as "Rememberance Days." There has been recently renewed interest in celebrating these days both on Whidbey and spilling over into the greater Seattle area. Seemingly they have become a major focal point for white supremacists in Seattle and the surrounding areas.

Besides the martyrdom of Matthews, one of the more longlasting effects of The Order was their adherence and propogation of the idea of the Northwest Territorial Imperative. The idea of the relocation of members of white supremacist organizations to a five-state region; Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Western Montana and Northern California, with the intent to eventually declare the regions as an "Aryan" homeland. These states were chosen for their high demographic of whiteness, general lawlessness and availabity of cheap land. What seems to us like a fairly hairbrained idea created by a small group of racist zealots, unfortunaelty gained traction over the decades. The influx of white pride supporters, 3rd positionists and general racists to the PNW is palpable.

A few of the first proponents of this idea were Richard Girnt Butler (1918-2004), former leader of the Aryan Nations and Harold

Traditionally a fairly closed event, last year (2014) the organizers posted a picture of some 30 NWHS members assembled on the island. This last December (2015) organizers, emboldened by recent altercations with anti-racists and the current political climate, organized a show in the Ballard neighborhood of Seattle, and called for a march on Capitol Hill, one of the city's historically queer and punk bar neighborhoods. There is a thoroughly researched article on the rose city antifa website about the lead up to this years martyr day celebration.

Earlier we mentioned the former Volksfront member Jacob Laskey, who since his release from prison has openly teamed up and communicated with members of Beer Hall Pautsch, one of the bands billed to play the Ballard show. The other band, out of five supposed to play, was Ironwill, who also have direct ties to American Front. On December 7th, Laskey announced on various social media outlets that "American Front is officially coming back! America for true Americans!" His intention is clear: to re-build American Front from its current semi-defunct state, but to build a more traditional bonehead organization that moves away from its former more esoteric and third positionist stances with explicitly white supremacist propaganda, heightened Islamaphobia and support for Donald Trump.

These reemergences come on the heels of conflicts in Olympia, WA during the summer and fall of 2015 around pro and anti police rallies following the OPD shooting of two young Black men. A chronicle of this back and forth between fascists, police supporters, anti-facists and anarchists can be found at *http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/114*. Suffice to say, anarchists and anti-fascists mounted a concerted and strategic campaign of confrontations against a conglomeration of pro-police/proto-fascists and an amalgamation of white supremacists organized off of Stormfront. A major player in this back and forth was a well known, but technically unaffiliated, white supremacist organizer named Jascha Manny. His calls, often associated with a number of organizations that most likely he has no connection to, were still a focal point for both the white power

Volksfront, plead guilty to three counts of first-degree intimidation for phoning three Jewish people and threatening to slit their throats and burn their homes. Volksfront members and associates have been convicted of attacks against other minorities as well. Laskey and Lord/Laird will show their faces later in the article as people still actively organizing in the PNW.

A number of active Volksfront members throughout the 90's were linked with members of another subgroup inside the skin scene, the Hammerskins, (also known as Hammerskin Nation). Formed in 1988 in Dallas, TX the group itself sprung from and for the production and promotion of white power music, and many white power bands have been affiliated with the group. Like most other organizations of its kind, the Hammerskins have seen a variety of divisions and fractures over the decades. Unlike Volksfront, they do maintain a current membership and organizing sphere. It's commonly thought that there are 6 chapters of varying sizes throughout the US, and another 6 internationally. The NW Hammerskins (NWHS) are the group we see having the most connection to other white supremacists in the PNW.

One of the main recent events organized by the NWHS is the annual "Martyr's Day" or "Day of Rememerance" event on Whidbey Island. Whether or not this event is in fact annual is suspect, but this is the way in which they speak of it. This event, and its recent centrality to white power organizing helps bring us full circle, back to where the racist ideology of one man, long since dead, is bringing together white supremacists across the region.

Covington (b. 1953) of the Northwest Front. Covington was a part of the federation of hate groups that organized the Greensboro Massacre of 1979 (where he likely met and coordinated with Frazier Glen Miller Jr) and is the founder of the National Socialist White People's Party, a group he relocated to Seattle in 1994 from Northern California. Covington will appear later as the moderator of web sites and blogs being utilized by modern white supremacists.

This concept of the "aryan homeland" plays a major role in the ways that white supremacist organizing looks in the PNW, and how it differs from the ways they show themselves in other parts of the country. Far from the white hoods of the south and midwest, and not quite as deeply entrenched as those in the NE, the PNW white supremacists are more concerned with cloaking their racist agendas inside of subculture and community organizing. Their intention is to build a broad base and they do so through means often empolyed or perfected by the Left. On what is probably the largest and most popular racist message board on the internet, Stormfront, there are many references to flyer marches, door knocking campaigns and pushing candidates through local elections, combined with an interest in Paganism and Odinism as well as the subcultures that surround them create, a particularly unique enemy. One that we may find sitting closer to us politically and physically in this region than in other parts of the country.

A major and long-standing example of this style of white supremacy is the PNW's American Front, a neo-Nazi skinhead organization formed in the Bay Area by Robert Heick in 1985. In early 1990 after his "White Worker's Day" rally was attacked by anti-racist protestors, Heick relocated the AF headquarters to Portland, OR. At the time, Portland had national reputation as "Skin City" due to the proliferation of skinhead groups there and the high-profile skinhead murder of Ethiopian student Mulugeta Seraw in 1988.

Heick and the American Front were well known for their introduction of "Third Position" politics within the United States white power scene. Briefly, Third Positionism is an attempt to merge

some “left-wing” concerns as well as a pro-worker orientation with more generic fascist or neo-Nazi politics. This is often seen within white supremacist circles as a left-wing variant of Nazism therefore distrusted by more traditionally Hitlerite or Klan oriented groups that are wary of anything that appears to be associated with the political left.

> “*While the American Front conforms in most respects to a typical racist skinhead organization, Robert Heick's mentors such as Tom Metzger and Rick Cooper have infused a heavy dose of idiosyncratic European fascist tendencies into his thinking. For example, in a flyer distributed by the American Front in 1991, the organization advocates neither a 'right wing' nor a 'left wing' political stance, but rather a 'Third Position: revolutionary racialnationalism.'*
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> *As part of this third position, the organization advocates an environmentalist alternative to 'consumer capitalism' and 'industrial communism.' Animal rights, (white) women's rights, and other political positions traditionally associated with the left are grafted onto racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic positions to round out these 'radical' neo-Nazis.*”
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> -The NW Imperative: Documeting A Decade Of Hate

Throughout the 90's, leadership in American Front changed hands several times. One of the people who took up the reigns was James Porrazo, who lead the organization farther away from the more bonehead or street subculture and deeper into the third positionist and National Revolutionary political territory. Over the years, the organization declined due to a mixture of infighting and the alienation of on the ground bonehead support, but strongholds in places like Florida and California still find adherents today.

Around the same time, another Oregon-based white power group emerged. This time directly out of and centering it's recruitment on the prison system, Volksfront emerged on the white power scene in 1994. Based on the meetings of four Oregon prisoners, the group formed to “revive the dying pro-White movement.” Of the four, neo-Nazi Randal Lee Krager is responsible for bringing Volksfront outside prison walls and setting up its headquarters in Portland, and is often attributed to being their leader. Krager was serving a 36-month sentence for brutally attacking a Black man with a blunt object in 1992. On the outside, the group maintained tight connections with other imprisoned racists and prioritized prisoner support as a main tenent of their member retention.

Many white supremacist groups maintain a rigid stance ideologically, while Volksfront was ideologically and theologically flexible, allowing its followers considerable leeway in their beliefs as long as they shared a commitment to white supremacy and a “folkish” lifestyle. They were able to attract members from movements such as Creativity and Christian Identity, which holds radically different religous and lifestyle beliefs.

Volksfront leader and main founder Randal Krager, an Odinist, married Abbie Chelf, a Christian Identity adherent. Most Volksfront members, however, are Odinists, a Norse pagan religion with many racist adherents. Volksfront's official symbol reflects its Odinist roots. It is made up of the neo-pagan Life Rune (algiz), symbolizing life and protection, in white, which is encircled in black on a red background. The acronym of Volksfront (VF) is bisected by the rune.

Even though the group is technically defunct and there is no formal leadership, Volksfront still has organizing capabilities based on old affinites and the sheer terror their name implies. They were never a group to shy away from violence and have deep roots in the on-the-ground skin scene prolific in Portland at the time. Coming from that scene was Jacob Laskey, who in April 2007, a Volksfront member at the time, received an 11-year sentence for throwing rocks engraved with swastikas at a Eugene, OR synagogue during services in 2002. This was not the first time a Volksfront member attacked this same synagogue. Chris Lord/Laird, a Volksfront member, served four and a half years in prison for shooting at the Synagogue in Eugene with an assault rifle in 1994. That same year, Randal Krager, the leader of